

Public Abstract

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Title:USING NONCOGNITIVE ASSESSMENT TO PREDICT
ACADEMIC SUCCESS FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS

The purpose of this study was to determine if noncognitive variables, alone or in combination with standardized test score (ACT or SAT) and/or high school grade point average, can predict student success (first-semester grade point average, first to second year retention and five year graduation rate) for 154 academically at-risk college freshmen admitted in the Fall 2007 semester to the Conditional Admissions Program (CAP) at the University of Central Missouri. In this investigation, student success was defined as a first semester GPA of 2.0 or higher, retaining to the second year and graduating within a five year time frame.

Through the six- question short answer-style Insight Resume[®], noncognitive attributes were evaluated based on each student's life experiences and what they learned from those experiences. Multiple methods of data analysis were used, employing both a Spearman Rho correlation coefficient as well as logistic regression. Findings revealed there were only slight correlations between Insight Resume[®] score and earning a first semester GPA of 2.0 or greater, retaining from the first to the second year, and graduating in five years. Although still statistically insignificant at .130, graduating in five years was found to be closest to being statistically significant of the three to scores on the Insight Resume[®]. A logistic regression analysis was also used, attempting to measure the predictive value of the combination of the Insight Resume[®] scores, HSGPA and composite ACT scores on predicting first semester GPA of 2.0 or higher, retention, or five-year graduation rate. Using a .05 level of significance, results revealed that there was no indication any of the predictor variables significantly improved the ability to predict earning a first semester GPA of 2.0 or higher or whether a student would retain or graduate. When looking at which variable was closest to being statistically significant, HSGPA measured highest for earning a GPA of 2.0 or higher (.125.), ACT score was most significant for retaining from the first to second year (.337) and Insight Resume[®] score was best for predicting graduation in five years (.179).

Although the findings of this research were relatively insignificant when attempting to predict student success, previous studies using alternative noncognitive assessment methods creates potential implications for the college admissions practice. Determining the best methods to evaluate prospective student applications with the goal of admitting students who have the potential to be successful will continue to be the core of the profession. Previous research has shown the benefits of utilizing a holistic approach to application review, combining noncognitive assessment with traditional methods such as standardized test scores and high school grade point averages.

While this research included both noncognitive and traditional measures in attempting to predict academic success across three different student success categories, it was certainly not a complete review. Given the limited research using the Insight Resume[®] currently existing in the field, there is ample need for more studies to be conducted. Research regarding different student populations and inclusive of more variables to create a more comprehensive view are needed. Specifically, socioeconomic background and ethnicity should be analyzed, as well as including other non-traditional populations such as first-generation students. Expanding the research will help build the knowledge base for noncognitive assessment and hopefully

strengthen the argument to include a more holistic review of admissions applications in an effort to ensure student success.